DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 414 SP 030 934

AUTHOR Jordan, K. Forbis
TITLE State Professional Standards/Practices Commissions or Boards: A Policy Analysis Paper.
INSTITUTION American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
REPORT NO ISBN-0-89333-058-2
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 49p.; Produced by the State Issues Clearinghouse.
AVAILABLE FROM ACCTE Publications, One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 610, Washington, DC 20036-2412 ($15.00 plus $2.00 shipping and handling).
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Board of Education Role; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Policy Formation; *Schools of Education; *State Standards; *Teacher Associations; *Teacher Certification; *Teacher Education Programs

ABSTRACT

This monograph explores the implicit and explicit public policy issues inherent in the debate over who is responsible for teacher certification and standards. A question is raised on the process to be used in making key decisions about the content of teacher education programs and entry into teaching. The issue of whether state agencies will continue to set the policies that determine entry into teaching or whether national teacher organizations in concert with non-public agencies will become the dominant force is discussed. The role of schools, colleges and departments of education is also examined. National teacher organizations have supported the creation of standards/practices commissions, but current pressures for creating these bodies are coming from education reform advocates as well as state political figures. Interest in creating commissions appears to be high, and this may contribute to dramatic changes in the structure and content of teacher preparation programs. It is pointed out that opportunities to have more power in setting licensing standards and reviewing professional practices may be short-lived unless educators are perceived as capable of meeting the challenge. (JD)

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American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

State Professional Standards/Practices Commissions or Boards:

A POLICY ANALYSIS PAPER

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Publication of this document was supported in part by a grant from the Ford Foundation.

The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Eductaion or of the Ford Foundation. AACTE is printing and distributing this document to stimulate discussion, study, and improvement of teacher education.

Copies of *State Professional Standards/Practices Commissions or Boards: A Policy Analysis Paper* may be ordered from:
AACTE Publications
One Dupont Circle, Suite 610
Washington, DC 20036-2412

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Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 89-080020

International Standard Book Number: 0-89333-058-2

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FOREWORD

Debate over the locus of responsibility for teacher certification and standards for the profession has been prominent in the history of education in the United States, but perhaps never so prominent as now. AACTE began tracking the activities of states with respect to standards boards during the spring of 1987, and published the first data on standards boards in the sixth edition of *Teacher Education Policy in the States: A 50-State Survey of Legislative and Administrative Actions* (June 1987). By the June 1988 edition, all states except Connecticut, Maine, and South Dakota had a designated standards board or like body.

Recognizing that standards boards have tremendous potential for influencing teacher education policy, AACTE invited Forbis Jordan to produce a policy analysis paper on the topic. We asked him to direct his attention to the role of professionals in schools, colleges, and departments of education in the standards process—specifically, what are the issues and problems facing AACTE members as their states examine the nature and authority of their professional standards boards.

The results of Jordan's investigation are contained in this volume. *State Professional Standards/Practices Commissions or Boards* explores the implicit and explicit public policy issues inherent in the debate over who is responsible for teacher certification and standards.

I would like to acknowledge Forbis Jordan for taking on this assignment and AACTE's Combined Committee on Governmental Relations for its oversight of the project and critique of the draft manuscript. The committee represents AACTE, the Association of Colleges and Schools of Education in State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and Affiliated Private Universities (ACSESULGC/APU), the Association of Independent Liberal Arts Colleges for Teacher Education, and the Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities. Funding for the project was provided by AACTE, ACSESULGC/APU, and the Ford Foundation.

Eugene E. Eubanks
AACTE President

February 1989

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The power of schools, colleges, and departments of education (SCDEs) is being challenged as severely today as at any time in history regarding the process that will be used to make key decisions about the content of teacher education programs and entry into teaching. Will state agencies continue to set the policies that determine entry into teaching, or will the national teacher organizations in consort with nonpublic agencies become the dominant force? What role will SCDEs have in these policy decisions?

For several years, national teacher organizations have supported the creation of standards/practices commissions, but current pressures for creating these bodies are coming from education reform advocates as well as state political figures. Interest in creating commissions appears to be high, and this may contribute to dramatic changes in the structure and content of teacher preparation programs. The momentum is difficult to assess, however, because the boards or commissions as of 1987 had final regulatory authority in only California, Minnesota, and Oregon.

Opportunities to have more power in setting licensing standards and reviewing professional practices may be short-lived unless educators are perceived as capable of meeting the challenge. The unresolved question is whether these developments will further divide or unify the teaching interest groups.

GLOSSARY

Within the context of this paper, the following definitions apply:

AACTE: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

AFT: American Federation of Teachers.

Board/commission: Interchangeable terms used when referring to a group of persons with specific responsibilities.

Certificate: A nonlegal document issued by a private group indicating that a person possesses certain competencies.

Educator: Teachers, administrators, and professional support personnel who are required to have a state-issued license to be employed in their job in the public schools.

License: A legal document indicating a person possesses a threshold level of prerequisite skills or competencies, typically issued by a state-level public agency and entitling the holder to engage in certain practices in the state.

NCATE: National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

NEA: National Education Association.

Practices: The activities that a person engages in while performing a job.

Public member: A commission/board member who is not employed in a job requiring an educator's license or in a teacher education institution.

SCDE(s): Schools, colleges, and departments of education in higher education institutions.

S/P boards: Professional standards/practices commissions or boards.

Standards: Expectations or performance levels expected of persons performing certain jobs.

State Professional Standards/Practices Commissions or Boards: A Policy Analysis Paper

Even though considerable attention has been drawn recently to state-level professional standards/practices commissions or boards (S/P boards), comparable bodies have existed since the 1920s. Today, virtually all states have either an advisory body or one with final regulatory authority (AACTE 1987). These boards or commissions were formed in response to in-state pressures for uniform professional standards for educators. Before state boards were established to issue licenses, or certificates, to educators, local school districts or county superintendents decided whether a person was qualified.

This paper focuses on the implications of the increased interest in developing state and national public and nonpublic bodies to issue either licenses to entering and practicing educators or certificates to practicing educators. An underlying concern is the role that SCDE representatives will have in the decision-making process.

The first sections of the paper list the functions of S/P boards, present the rationale for their creation, and provide summary information about their status. A discussion of the current context and the forces affecting policy decisions about S/P boards follows. Structural issues of interest to SCDEs and potential problems are then addressed, and the paper concludes with a brief

summary. The Appendix contains models or options for state level commissions.

Statement of the Issue

The issue is, what will be the functions of S/P boards and who will control them? Some states have had S/P boards for many years, but recent efforts focus on expanding the concept and increasing the power of teachers in making policy decisions. One unknown is the role of SCDEs in the decision-making process. A basic question is:

> Will S/P boards serve in an advisory capacity to the state educational agency, or will they have the power to exercise final regulatory authority?

Discussions about the role and responsibilities of these state-level bodies typically focus on three functions:

- Setting, monitoring, and enforcing standards of conduct for the practicing professional educator. In this context, the results are punitive actions on educators.

- Establishing standards for entry into teaching and for educational preparation programs. The body sets entry requirements for teacher education programs, determines if applicants for teaching licenses meet the requirements, grants a license to applicants, and reviews and approves SCDE programs.

- Issuing certificates that are status symbols of an individual's competency and recognized by members of the profession rather than serving in a punitive or screening function.

This list of broad functions provides some background for the following discussion of the current status and functions of S/P boards as reported by AACTE (1987).

Functions of Existing State-Level Commissions

State-level boards or commissions on standards and practices for professional educators are found in virtually all states. Their principal functions are to develop procedures for reviewing and approving the professional education programs in the state's SCDEs, to make recommendations concerning educator licensing programs, and to issue licenses to entering and practicing educators. They also have the authority to set, monitor, and enforce standards of conduct for the practicing professional educator. The most prevalent powers include establishing basic state standards for entry into teaching, determining if applicants have met the entry requirements, and granting state licenses and renewals.

State-level bodies have existed since the 1920s in New Jersey and since the 1940s in Indiana, Nebraska, South Carolina, and West Virginia. Of the states with boards or commissions, 11 were created in the 1960s, 18 in the 1970s, and 12 in the 1980s. The groups were formed as a result of state legislative action in 26 states, by action of the state board of education in 15

states, and by action of the state education agency in 5 states (AACTE 1987).

Membership varies among the states. Teachers typically have a designated number of positions, and administrators tend to have slightly less representation than teachers. In 22 states, membership is specifically provided for members of local school boards. In 36 states, the teacher associations nominate persons for membership. The governor then makes appointments in 9 states, the chief state school officer in 13 states, and the state board of education in 24 states (AACTE 1987).

In 42 states, the board or commission makes recommendations for actions to other agencies. The state standards board has final regulatory authority in only California, Minnesota, and Oregon. Preliminary approval of regulations is a board responsibility in 21 states (AACTE 1987). Boards or commissions are responsible for standards on an autonomous or advisory basis as follows:

Type of Standard	*Number of States*	
	Autonomous	*Advisory*
License granting	3	4
License rescinding	3	6
Professional oversight	4	14
Initial licensing	3	43
License renewal	3	43
SCDE entry and exit requirements	3	43
SCDE curricula approval	3	43
SCDE program approval	4	42
Staffing for SCDE site visits	8	10

Source: AACTE 1987.

Rationale for Creating State Commissions

The NEA (1987) restated its long-standing support of the proposition that the teaching profession should be self-governing and advocated state-level S/P boards that control educator licensing and approve professional preparation programs. The association is particularly interested in the professional preparation of teachers.

The various school reform reports of the 1980s have stressed the need to improve teacher preparation programs and upgrade the quality of the existing teaching force. This interest has increased the support for shifting certification and program approval control from the traditional public bodies in state educational agencies to public or nonpublic groups controlled by practicing teachers. These groups would assume responsibility for determining entry-level standards, policing their peers, and enforcing a code of professional standards. S/P boards could set standards for entry into education and renewal of licenses, and take appropriate disciplinary action against educators after reviewing reports of questionable professional conduct.

Only a few practicing educators are perceived to be performing at an inadequate level, but the concept of the public interest is being used to justify the creation of S/P boards to set expected performance standards and police the ranks of educators. Without formal action by review bodies, educators may resign to escape formal punitive action. They then could go to other states and work in schools that employ them without knowledge of, or access to, the prior record.

Current Context

Numerous legal, political, cultural, and educational conditions are evident in the movement for creation of state-level S/P boards. Traditionally, the state educational agency has been an active administrative agency responsible for issuing teacher licenses. These traditional arrangements, however, are being threatened with pressures for change and reorganization proposals from groups at both the national and state levels.

At the state level, the NEA affiliates have been staunch advocates for S/P boards, and recently have been joined by political figures associated with the school reform movement. They may now be working together, but the long-term interests of the professional educators and the politicians may be different. Consequently, the question for AACTE may be what role will SCDEs play in designing any proposed restructuring.

At the national level, the AFT, NEA, educator specialty organizations, and school reform advocates have emerged in active roles. Several school reform reports provided the impetus for creating the national certification commission. In an effort to maintain their credibility, some educator specialty groups have become active participants in national certification programs.

The influences on the current context of S/P boards have been quite diverse. They include discussions related to education as a state responsibility, professional education program approval and discipline, power/authority relationships, recommendations from education reform reports, proposals for a national certification board, role of educator specialty organizations, interstate

reciprocity interests, and evolution in function and mission of existing state-level bodies.

Education as a State Responsibility

The United States Constitution does not mention education. Thus, the general principle of U.S. constitutional law is that responsibility and authority for public elementary and secondary education are functions reserved for each of the 50 states. An extension of this principle is that states have an active role in licensing educators. The rationale for state educator licensing programs is twofold. First, compulsory education requires parents to send their children to school, and parents have a right to assume (a) that an adequate standard of care is exercised while their children are under the care of the school, and (b) that the educators possess knowledge and skills related to teaching. Second, the license provides the educator with protection from arbitrary dismissal based on the contention that the person does not possess the knowledge and skills related to teaching.

In response to the public interest argument and in an effort to raise standards for educators, state legislatures have enacted statutes that authorize the licensing procedures. Responsibility can be assigned to an executive agency with this sole function, to an agency with broader functions, or to a nongovernmental body. Under the first two options, agencies can assume responsibility with or without advice or counsel, or the agencies can rely upon the advice and counsel of advisory groups drawn from practicing educators, professional education

institutions, or the general public. Support can be found for including noneducators on both the advisory bodies and the nongovernmental bodies with the licensing responsibilities because of public interest in ensuring that educators possess a sufficient level of skills and knowledge.

Several points of controversy are related to state-authorized groups with responsibility for setting standards and issuing educator licenses. Concerns about the membership of the group include the following:

- Who should serve on the S/P boards? Should the group's membership be restricted to practicing educators, teacher educators, local school district representatives, or some mixture of these groups?

- Should the S/P boards have public members? Should the group be composed entirely of public members, or should there be a mixture of public members and practicing professionals? If the decision is made to have public members, what eligibility criteria will be used?

Different concerns related to issuing educator licenses include:

- What data should be used in making the decision to issue a license?
- What role should the professional education institutions have in the licensure decision?

- Should licenses be issued to graduates of an approved program without outside review?

Program Approval and Discipline

Traditionally, program approval has been a function of a public body at the state level. The concept of S/P boards is based on the assumption that members of the teaching profession should have a greater role in determining the criteria for entry into the profession, setting standards for the conduct of practicing members of the profession, and disciplining those members who do not observe the standards. Since the early 1960s, the NEA has strived to establish autonomous professional boards that have the authority to determine standards for entry into teaching.

Scannell (1988) reported that 21 states had statutory boards/commissions. They had the responsibility to conduct research and formulate recommendations for educational preparation programs and entry into teaching. An additional 15 states had advisory boards with no statutory basis. Scannell concluded that, even with the support of the NEA and the additional impetus for professional autonomy provided by the Carnegie Forum report, state policymakers will continue to influence standards for entry into teaching.

Power/Authority Relationships

Traditionally, power over teacher licensing and certification has resided at the state level in public bodies. Scannell (1988) concluded that the power of S/P boards was not related to the perceived strength of the NEA state affiliate. The affiliate, however, was considered to be a force affecting policies related to restriction of entry into professional education and initial licensing. The S/P boards exercised little influence over emergency certification policies; the most important factor related to restricting or relaxing emergency certificates was the state's need for teachers. The principal interest appeared to be the need for policymakers to find a quick solution and to adopt low-cost policies to reduce public pressure and encourage economic development. Scannell concluded that the restrictions on admission to professional education programs have not accomplished the goals of professionalizing teaching, and that the public has interpreted educators' resistance to extensive assessment measures as an inability or unwillingness to set high standards for prospective teachers.

This vacuum of power in policy formulation for professional education programs has become an attractive haven for many who seek to change traditional professional education programs and ease the entrance requirements for persons who did not take the preprofessional teacher education curriculum as undergraduates. In an effort to respond to this perceived problem, the school reform report from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) recommended establishment of a teaching profession that will find itself in control of the definition of a professional teacher.

If these goals of the school reform movement and the national teacher organizations can be achieved, the professional-educator-dominated S/P boards of the future would be similar to comparable bodies in other professions. The current structure has been criticized because of the responsiveness to political pressures and the rise and fall of teacher licensure standards in response to the supply and demand of teachers. When there is a surplus of teachers, standards tend to rise; and when there is a shortage, standards tend to decline so that a teacher can be in every classroom.

The concept of trust is evident in discussions about teacher empowerment through the formation of the S/P boards. The issues have been viewed as paradoxes in which (1) retention of state control will result in the failure to achieve standards, and (2) transfer of power to teachers will contribute to an increase in standards and the likelihood of failure to achieve standards (Wise 1986).

Education Reform Reports

The various education reform reports have been a significant part of the national scene that has contributed to increased interest in S/P boards. Recommendations concerning teachers have been a consistent theme in numerous education reform reports issued since the 1983 release of *A Nation at Risk* by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This report and several others have contained specific recommendations concerning teacher preparation programs and standards for teachers. Emphasis was placed on the

need for teachers to have more preparation in their teaching area, importance of recruiting better qualified persons into teaching, development of differentiated roles, and creation of a better reward system.

Recent education reform reports have disagreed about the placement of specialized courses in the academic preparation of teachers. Several reports advocated that professional education courses be delayed until completion of general education and academic major requirements, or even until completion of the baccalaureate degree. Some reports also suggested that those who had completed their baccalaureate degree with no professional education courses should be permitted to serve as intern teachers with a higher level of supervision than that traditionally provided for beginning teachers (Jordan 1987).

Teacher shortages and experiences with business and school cooperative programs have contributed to pressures for relaxation of professional education requirements and for the implementation of nontraditional teacher preparation programs. The extent to which teachers are adequately prepared is a matter of general concern. Several SCDEs have initiated developmental programs as a response to immediate problems and as an illustration of innovative flexibility. The consensus in the school reform reports is that teachers can be adequately prepared in nontraditional programs, but extensive planning and additional resources are needed to support such programs.

Proposals for a National Certification Board

The most prominent effort to establish a national certification board for elementary and secondary school teachers has come from the recommendations of the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession. These recommendations have led to the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The assumptions appear to be that holding a certificate from this board will contribute to increased public credibility for the recipient, and higher pay for teachers is more likely if standards for teachers are perceived to be higher. Both the NEA and the AFT have actively supported the concept of a national certification board.

Al Shanker (1986) of the AFT has expressed strong support for the development and implementation of a rigorous national professional examination for entering teachers. According to Shanker, all new teachers would be required to pass the examination and would achieve full certification status after completion of a supervised teaching internship. Experienced teachers would not be required to take the test, but they would be eligible to seek advanced certification on a voluntary basis.

Unanswered questions about the national certification board, such as the following, are complex and varied:

- What relationships will this group have with existing public agencies in states that issue licenses to teach as well as with professional organizations that become involved in certifying their members?

- Will possession of the national certificate automatically result in someone being granted a license by any state?

- Will standards be so high that the qualification rate will be too low for the process to be credible?

- Will the standards set by the national board be perceived as being racially or sexually discriminatory?

Different rationales for national certification have been presented. For example, one contention is that educational specialty boards could issue certificates to eligible teachers who would receive higher salaries based on their certification status. Certification thus becomes the basis for determining pay. The existence of 18 national specialty boards in medicine with certification standards that are applied nationally indicates the complexities of education having specialty certification (Lieberman 1985). The national certification program for science teachers illustrates the possibilities for secondary teacher certification (Walsh 1987). Potential certification "turf" and jurisdictional issues become evident when the independent organizations representing teachers in several disciplines or educational occupations are considered.

The tasks before the national certification board are complex and varied. Establishing a national system for awarding certification requires identification of the elements to be assessed, procedures for assessment, development of instruments, determination of standards, and creation of a

management system for administering and maintaining the program. Even if all these goals can be attained, the efforts probably will be shaped and modified as they are subjected to the influence of the nation's political and economic system (Erbes 1987).

Educator Specialty Organizations

The national certification body is emphasizing subject matter competencies. This, coupled with public interest, logically leads to specialty organizations representing particular educator groups. Such organizations would seek to have their group's interests represented in certification programs, licensing requirements, and program approval. The challenge for these specialty organizations is to integrate their interests into the activities of the education reform movement. These organizations then become allied with the state legislatures and citizen commissions that are active in determining education policy and interested in improving teacher education programs.

Aldridge (1984) gives an example of this developing interest by educator specialty groups. The National Science Teachers Association's (NSTA) program for certifying science teachers was launched in response to contentions that science teachers in many American schools were inadequately qualified and a significant number of all science teachers were teaching out-of-field. NSTA's apparent goal is to assume responsibility for identifying the science teachers who meet the standards for certification. The assumption is that the higher

NSTA standards for science teachers will be adopted by states to provide evidence of the quality of their schools.

In a more recent discussion, Walsh (1987) noted that the NSTA has moved forward with its efforts and has named the first group of educators to win approval under the organization's certification program. The goals of NSTA's certification efforts are to increase the standards for training and employment of science teachers, to provide certification for well qualified persons, and to have school officials consider certification in decisions on employment and salary. NSTA plans to form regional committees, consisting of science teachers at different grade levels, a college science professor, and a science education professor. The process involves documentation of academic background and noncredit educational experience, evaluations of teaching performance, and testimony of colleagues. Walsh (1987) concludes that the NSTA does not intend to challenge the current system, but does intend to influence teacher education programs.

Walsh (1987) noted that significant variations existed in standards among states. Reports of variations in standards were reinforced in a national study (Dumas and Weible 1984) that found some difficulty in interpreting state standards because institutions may have higher standards than the state. The assumption was that reports about state standards may understate the actual requirements in a state.

From a different perspective, art has become an integral component in the elementary, junior high/middle, and high school curriculum as a part of the

Florida school reform legislation. After reviewing state licensing standards, the National Art Education Association has raised questions about the extent to which state certification standards are adequate to ensure the sound preparation of competent and effective teachers of art and design (Bradley 1984-85).

The potential impact of educator specialty groups is illustrated by the efforts of various organizations to influence the guidelines for professional education preparation programs that are incorporated into the institutional review and approval process of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Groups whose guidelines have been accepted by NCATE are the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance; the Association for Educational Communications and Technology; the Council for Exceptional Children; the National Association of School Psychologists; the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics; and NSTA (Fisher 1986).

This development in the approval of professional education preparation programs raises different questions:

- Will NCATE be the vehicle that educational specialty groups use to promulgate entry-level standards for the nation's elementary and secondary school educators?

- Will the public, state, and local educational agencies, and the broader education community have sufficient opportunity to participate and provide comment during the development of the

certification standards or the review of those seeking certification?

- Will these actions be perceived as attempts to bypass the established state licensing and program approval processes for making changes in professional education preparation requirements?

Interstate Reciprocity Interests

Instead of advocating a national licensing program for educators, the interstate reciprocity agreements have benefitted SCDEs by permitting persons trained as educators in one state to be qualified for employment in a similar job in another state. SCDEs holding membership in AACTE may find the future of interstate reciprocity agreements to have some intriguing implications for S/P boards such as the following:

- Will the various professional specialty organizations become active in each state and push for NCATE adoption of uniform undergraduate teacher education requirements?

- Will state bodies be able to resist the pressures for standardization that will emerge as a result of the national certification movements in the specialty organizations and the national board?

This futuristic scenario is quite different from the past when state certification officers worked with leaders from SCDEs and promoted relationships that resulted in the development of interstate reciprocity agreements. These agreements were important for the high-producing SCDEs whose graduates were mobile and sought jobs in the national market.

The NEA (1987) traditionally has focused its efforts on state-level professional boards or commissions and has continued to endorse the formation of these bodies. The AFT (1986) also supports professional certification, but has taken an additional step in endorsing teaching certificates that would be valid in all states, thus relieving the pressures for reciprocal licensing agreements among states.

An unanswered question is the extent to which the educator specialty groups and the political forces in each state will have an interest in maintaining the reciprocal relationships that exist among states. Through these arrangements, school districts with shortages of teachers could recruit nationally and staff their schools with fully licensed teachers. If each state develops professional education preparation programs that are unique, or if the educator specialty groups seek and obtain increased preparation requirements on a state-by-state basis, the result may be wide variations in standards with little opportunity for reciprocity at the fully licensed level.

State Actions

States act through their legislatures, and the results often differ because of various pressures and dissimilar cultural, political, social, and economic conditions among the states. In some cases, changes occur when a political vacuum or pressures for education reform provide state legislatures with the opportunity to take action. Recent legislative actions in Florida have resulted in the development of an intern program for new teachers that involves a three-member support team consisting of a teacher, administrator, and one "other" professional educator (Hunter and Haines 1985; Shea 1982).

Another example of state actions was reported by Love (1984) in a description of a program in Mississippi. Faced with a rapid increase in demand for vocational educators, Mississippi State University and the Mississippi Department of Vocational and Technical Education developed a cooperative program to train and license vocational educators. The potential transference of some program components to other educational areas suggests interesting implications for professional education preparation programs, especially the policy for granting college credit for completion of competency examinations. Mississippi State University is accepting the certification of skills through the national competency test. The institution then awards college credit for satisfactory completion of a national competency test; however, the number of hours awarded depends upon the person's score. This credit is then used as a substitute for courses in the content areas covered by the examination. Under the program, nondegree teachers pursue bachelor's degrees, and instructional

components of the program are provided through workshops at regional (off-campus) centers.

The Florida program developed as a result of actions of the state legislature, but the Mississippi program appears to have been a state agency and SCDE effort to respond to a teacher shortage problem. In isolation, each of these examples of innovation and flexibility probably would be justified and supported by their advocates. In a broader context, however, the potential problem is that outside observers may perceive the acceptance and institutionalization of these "new" approaches as suggesting a lack of substance or content in professional education preparation programs. Outside observers may contend that the actions provide sufficient rationale for dispensing with the traditional models for professional education preparation programs in which formal pedagogically related instruction is followed by a structured field experience under the supervision of the SCDE.

McEwin and Allen (1985) provide additional justification for "third-party" proposals to change teacher education programs in their paper concerning the preparation of middle-school teachers. They contend that the increase in the number of middle schools has been much more rapid than the increase in the number of teacher education programs or certification (licensing) requirements. In the current era of school reform, pressures may increase for a more timely response pattern from SCDEs.

Another perspective on educator licensing requirements was provided by two recent actions in Arkansas. The state board of education approved an

alternative plan that permits college graduates to receive licenses in their third year of teaching; they would be eligible following two summer training sessions and two years of teaching under the supervision of mentor teachers. The board also took action to strengthen regular licensing requirements for candidates from traditional teacher education programs (*Education Week* 8 June 1988).

Structural Issues of Interest to AACTE and Its Members

During the past quarter century, many groups have sought to control various aspects of education, but the struggle for power has become more evident with the advent of the school reform movement. An area of special interest has been educator licensing and professional practices. Earlier, school administrators and SCDE professors and deans had power and influence in teacher organization that was disproportionate to their numbers. These educators now often find themselves "on the outside looking in." This is the context from which many SCDEs contemplate the future of state S/P boards.

Legal responsibilities and functions of S/P boards are inconsistent among the states because of the state governance structure for education. Reasons for the variation include state constitutional provisions, historical events, political power struggles, personalities and interests of professional and political leaders, and a desire to be different.

The following discussion addresses areas of potential interest to SCDEs such as the scope of functions and responsibilities for S/P boards, relationships of S/P boards with other agencies, enforcement authority of S/P boards,

composition and method of selection for S/P boards, and representation of the public interest.

Scope of Functions and Responsibilities

S/P boards can have numerous functions and responsibilities. Their role may be viewed from three dimensions.

- What should be the primary task of the body? Should the sole function be to establish basic standards for persons seeking teaching licenses, or should the body's functions include review of misconduct referrals for practicing educators?

- What should be the body's responsibilities? Should they be related to licensing, or policing, all certified personnel in the schools, only teachers, or also teacher aides and other school employees?

- What role should the body have in approving professional education preparation programs? To what extent should it be involved in setting policies and procedures, administering the program review, and making the final program approval decision?

The most important consideration, however, is:

> Is the role of the S/P boards advisory or decision-making?

If the function is advisory, then some public body such as a state board of education will make the final decision. Even though such decisions may be pro forma, the legal responsibility for the decision would reside with the designated body.

SCDEs have a complex system of accreditation and program evaluation of institutions by regional accrediting commissions and of educator education programs by NCATE. An unanswered question is the extent to which the activities of S/P boards will be integrated with and supportive of other groups' activities. Issues include whether the S/P boards will

- set standards for all professional education preparation programs, or only for teacher education;
- determine procedures for institutional visitations;
- select members of visitation teams; and
- review and take action on the reports of the visiting teams.

The extent to which S/P boards are active in these areas will affect the influence that the boards have on professional education programs and also on educator licensing and certification requirements.

Both certification and licensure might be viewed as an external recognition of a person's competency to be an educator. Professional discipline in this context refers to members of the profession reviewing the performance of a peer to determine if that performance meets professional standards.

Certification is sought by the individual, or is voluntary, honorific, and bestowed by a voluntary group after review of a person's performance. Licenses are issued by a state agency and are required before a person can assume the role of an educator.

Professional disciplinary actions typically are taken either by a group established by the profession or by the state. Following a hearing, advisory recommendations are submitted to a public body that has the authority to revoke or suspend a license or to take other punitive actions after reviewing the case.

Vesa et al. (1984) give a specific example from Nebraska. The state's professional practices body is responsible for reviewing the ethics and competencies for public educators and for defining teaching. The group also has responsibility for setting standards relative to the qualifications of teacher aides.

Relationships Between S/P Boards and Other Agencies

As S/P boards evolve, a major policy development will be the extent to which each takes an independent path or attempts to integrate its policies, standards, and procedures with those of other states and regional and national accrediting agencies. For licensing, interstate reciprocity benefits both institutions and their professional education students. For program review and approval, the disadvantages of contradictory policies are evident in the problems that they present for the SCDE and the agency reviewing the program.

Standards and procedures need not be identical, but they can be complementary, thus reducing duplicative efforts.

Professional education interest groups and public and quasi-public entities are faced with the challenge of working together and seeking a mutually satisfactory middle ground. Long-term resolution of this issue will be affected by the extent to which various forces seek to accommodate the interests of others.

One speculative question is the extent to which standards and procedures of national certification programs by professional associations and the new national certification board will be integrated into the activities of state-level S/P boards. The state-level groups probably will have limited capacity to influence the decisions of the national groups. Thus, two relevant questions are:

- Will the standards and procedures of the national entities be accepted as policies of the state-level groups?
- Will national certification operate like current interstate reciprocal agreements?

Enforcement Authority

The differences between being the legally constituted state authority and having an advisory role can be significant, but an advisory body can be quite influential without having any accountability or responsibility. If the board has final decision-making authority, the power to enforce a decision will be related to its power to revoke or suspend program approval or educator licenses. If the function is advisory, recommendations must be submitted to another body before they can be promulgated.

Rather than an enforcement concern, the issue may be whether the body is independent of the state educational agency or the state legislature. Even if independent, the body is a creature of the state, however, and can be altered at the will of the legislature and subjected to political pressures.

Composition of S/P boards and Method of Selection

The composition of S/P boards is often a point of contention from three dimensions—the types of persons to be appointed, source of the appointment, and role of the board. Questions include the following:

- What proportion of the board should be comprised of teachers?
- Should other professional educators also be represented, and if so, which ones?
- What are the relative merits of the board having noneducator public members?

- What is the perceived role of the members of the board? Should they represent the interests of a constituency, or should they serve as representatives of the public interest?

The last question relates to members from any sector—classroom teachers, school administrators, school boards, higher education representatives, or lay citizens.

From the public interest standpoint, one difficulty with S/P boards is that most members come from the institutions or constituent groups that are being regulated. In essence, the process is self-governed and self-policed. It also is self-enforced, which is one reason used to justify why such groups should have advisory rather than regulatory functions. Additional discussion on this point is included in the Appendix.

If the S/P board has responsibility for program approval or licensing standards, SCDEs have an interest in the board's activities and should be involved in the decision-making process. If the focus is on professional practices, then higher education representatives might be members of the board, but their perspective would be that of any educators, not of SCDE representatives. If the function is program approval or licensing, the issue of SCDE representation is complex in terms of higher education membership. Questions include the following:

- How many higher education representatives should be on the board?

- Should the higher education representatives be from SCDEs or from the disciplines?
- Should both public and private institutions be represented?
- How should the representatives be selected?

Representation of the Public Interest

From the perspective of the national teacher organizations, inclusion of persons to represent the public's interest may be viewed as contrary to the concept of professional determination. The rationale for public representation, however, is that the schools are public and the public has a legitimate interest in participating in decisions about teacher qualifications. For example, consider the current controversy over recertification, or testing, of existing educators. The NEA is opposed, but a nationally recognized evaluation expert and the chief state school officer in Texas have presented an opposing point of view from the perspective of the public's interest (Popham and Kirby 1987).

This desire to protect the public interest possibly has contributed to professional boards being advisory to ensure that the recommendations of the profession will be subjected to some type of public scrutiny. A modification would be for the professional standards functions to be advisory and the professional practices functions to be delegated to a body consisting of members of the teaching profession. Even with the latter, however, such punitive actions as withdrawal of a license would have to be taken by an official public body.

Potential Problems

During the current education reform era, an unanswered question is the possible actions that S/P boards might take regarding various educational developments. Potential problems include pedagogy and teaching content, role of the specialty groups, relationships with other agencies, reciprocity agreements, professional associations, and external forces. Each is reviewed in the following discussion.

Pedagogy and Teaching Content Area

For decades, tensions have existed in teacher education baccalaureate programs as efforts have been made to balance the desire for additional professional education courses with increased emphasis on general education and courses in the teaching discipline. Dumas and Weible (1984) suggest that institutions have tended to move away from professional education requirements and to increase course work in arts and science. This direction also has been suggested in some school reform reports. The tensions are illustrated in the diversity of positions found among the states. Some states require a minimal introduction to professional education, a large number of general education courses, and student teaching. Others have the reverse requirements and still others seek a balance between the two interests. Dumas and Weible purport that these conditions exist in a setting where research is inadequate to justify one approach as a means to improve a teacher's classroom performance. Further, they suggest that the central problem is related to the flood of

conflicting advice and opinions from professional organizations, commission reports, and critics of education.

Professional education is being scrutinized at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. In policy-level discussions about professional education preparation programs, deans and professors in SCDEs often are no longer in their historical leadership roles. The training level and career commitment of professional educators in general and educational specialists in particular have increased, and these persons are contending for a limited number of state and national leadership positions and opportunities.

In addition, teacher education programs have been subjected to criticism in the school reform reports and by practitioners who are graduates of teacher education programs. Many interests are seeking a redistribution of the power and control over preservice and inservice teacher education programs; SCDEs do not appear to be gaining power and influence. An immediate example occurs at the postbaccalaureate level. Local school districts and state educational agencies offer programs that result in continuing education units (CEUs) rather than college credit, thus leaving the professional education preparation institutions "out of the loop." The federally funded Leadership for Educational Administration Development (LEAD) program also frequently operates outside traditional administrator training programs. The potential policy endorsement of these activities by S/P boards is an additional development confronting SCDEs.

Role of the Specialty Groups

In the same pattern as discussed above for state educational agencies, S/P boards may encourage the educator specialty organizations to provide the experiences required for licensing in their area. This option is somewhat similar to the possible long-range outcomes from the assessment programs that have been initiated by the American Association of School Administrators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

These assessment programs appear to assume that individuals have different needs and that some type of individualized experiential program can be developed to provide the person with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in the position. When a person demonstrates that the needed skills and knowledge have been acquired, the professional association will provide some type of certification that could lead to the issuance of a license. Preliminary review suggests that many of these experiences can be acquired and certified without a person taking additional college courses.

Impact on Existing Reciprocity Arrangements

As S/P boards are initiated, existing reciprocity agreements likely will be reexamined. Much of the impetus will be related to the school reform movement recommendations and the differences in requirements among states. State directors of teacher education and certification and the SCDEs often have been influential in developing these reciprocal agreements. Their influence is likely to decline, however, in a period characterized by a redistribution of power.

Voluntary National Certification

Another unanswered question is the extent to which SCDEs will be affected by efforts of S/P boards to promote various school reform recommendations related to teacher education programs and the voluntary national certification program. Even though voluntary national certification standards may appear to be nonthreatening, how long can credible and well-publicized "voluntary" national standards remain truly voluntary? With the decentralized pattern of educational governance among states and school districts and the current interest in improving educational quality, pressures probably will emerge from many political and public sources for a state either to adopt the standards or to explain why they have not been adopted. Local school boards probably will be pressured to employ teachers who possess the new certificates.

Summary

The extent to which S/P boards will develop and become influential is difficult to assess. In 1987, such boards or commissions had final regulatory authority in only California, Minnesota, and Oregon. The national teacher organizations and the public/political forces supporting school reform, however, have expressed support for the formation of S/P boards. As a result, traditional state-level balances of power are being challenged.

With these developments, educators may be provided with opportunities to become more involved in setting licensing standards and reviewing professional practices. These opportunities may be short-lived, however, unless the education community is perceived by political and public leaders as being capable of meeting the challenge.

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APPENDIX
Models/Options for State-Level Boards/Commissions

For purposes of illustration, the following discussion includes generic options for state-level boards or commissions. Advocates for these bodies typically are confronted with two basic policy issues.

One issue is the scope of assigned responsibility. The range of responsibilities includes setting standards for teaching licenses and preparation programs, issuing and revoking teaching licenses and SCDE program approvals, conducting SCDE visitations, reviewing SCDE visitation reports, and taking disciplinary actions concerning the professional conduct of existing educators.

A second issue in designing such boards is whether their function is to be regulatory or advisory. A regulatory body has the authority to make the final decision, and its actions are subject to review only by the court. These groups typically have a legal basis in the state constitution or statutes, and usually are classified as public bodies and subjected to the same constraints concerning open meetings, public hearings, and public access to records as state agencies. Advisory bodies often have some of the same constraints on their actions because they may be required to hold open meetings and conduct hearings, but they do not have the authority to make the final decision. Their recommendations are submitted to either the state board of education or the chief state school officer for final action.

Professional Standards Boards

Standards-setting boards can have the authority to adopt licensing and SCDE program approval standards, develop and implement procedures for SCDE review, and approve the issuance of licenses and preparation programs. In the same manner as accrediting agencies, membership is often drawn from the agencies or constituent groups that are being regulated. As indicated above, such groups may be mandatory or advisory.

The advantages of professional standards boards include the following:

1. The principal responsibility of the body is to set standards for licensing and preparation programs, and the group can devote primary attention to the these functions.

2. Professional input for decisions is provided from the educators and representatives of SCDEs who typically hold membership.

3. The formation of such boards supports the concept of the profession of teaching and is consistent with state actions concerning other professions.

The disadvantages of professional standards boards include the following:

1. Teachers may be overrepresented in the membership of such bodies, and other professional educators and interest groups may be underrepresented.

2. Issues of bias and self-interest may be raised if professional educators dominate the membership.

3. The general public probably will have limited opportunities to express its interests and concerns and/or influence the deliberations of the body.

Professional Practices Review Boards

Professional practices review boards can have the authority to adopt codes of ethics and standards of behavior for practicing educators, develop and implement procedures for review of referrals of misconduct by teachers and/or other professional educators, recommend revocation or suspension of licenses, and recommend other appropriate punitive action. Membership would be drawn from the constituent groups whose behavior is being reviewed. Statutes may provide for the actions of such boards to be mandatory or advisory.

The advantages of professional practices review boards include the following:

1. The formation of such bodies supports the concept of the teaching profession as being self-policing and is consistent with actions concerning other professions.

2. The principal responsibilities of the boards are to set standards for professional behavior and to review reported cases of misconduct. The board can devote primary attention to these functions.

3. The existence of the boards and their actions in reviewing the professional practice referrals provides the public with assurances of responsible professional review of questionable practices.

The disadvantages of professional practices review boards include the following:

1. Pressures are being applied for the membership to come primarily from the ranks of teachers, which neglect other professional educators and interest groups.

2. Issues of bias and self-interest may be raised if the membership is restricted to teachers.

3. Only limited opportunities will be provided for the general public's interests and concerns to be considered in the body's deliberations.

Dual/Multiple-Function Boards

Boards can have two types of authority. They can be responsible for adoption of licensing and SCDE program approval standards, development and implementation of procedures for SCDE review, and approval of the issuance of licenses and of preparation programs. They also can have the authority to adopt codes of ethics and standards of behavior for practicing educators, develop and implement procedures for review referral of misconduct by teachers and/or other professional educators, recommend revocation or suspension of licenses, and recommend other appropriate punitive action. Membership would be drawn from the constituent groups whose behavior is being reviewed as well as SCDEs and local school districts affected by the board's decisions. Statutes may provide for some board functions to be regulatory and for others to be advisory.

The advantages of the dual/multiple-function boards include the following:

1. The board has broad responsibilities that are interactive, and the rationale and effect of certain decisions would improve the information base for other decisions.

2. Professional input for decisions is provided from the educators and representatives of SCDEs who likely would hold membership.

3. The formation of such boards supports the concept of the teaching profession setting its own standards and policing its members. This is consistent with state actions concerning other professions.

The disadvantages of dual/multiple-function board include the following:

1. Determining the membership of the group would be difficult because of the multiple functions and the desires of some groups to be adequately represented. The membership of such bodies might be drawn primarily from the ranks of teachers to the neglect of other professional educators and interest groups. Issues of bias and self-interest may be raised because professional educators likely would dominate the membership.

2. The scope of responsibilities would be so great that some areas might be neglected because of member disinterest and time requirements for voluntary membership on a public or quasi-public body.

3. Because of the public nature of education, limited opportunities would be provided during board deliberations for the interests and concerns of the general public.

With these options, issues such as the following merit consideration:

1. Scope of responsibilities for the board.

2. Relative merits of board actions being advisory or regulatory.

3. Composition of the board, method of nomination and selection, and perception of whether members function as individuals or as representatives of a constituency.

4. Provision for the public interest being considered in board deliberations and decisions.

5. Extent to which actions will be taken in open meeting and opportunities will be provided for input from affected groups.